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**Personnel**

**SKILL CODING**



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This publication is used by managers, supervisors, employees, Civilian Personnel Flights (CPFs) and the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). It implements AFPD 36-14. It defines responsibilities and procedures relating to coding knowledge and skills required of current civilian positions and employee work experiences in the legacy Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) until the deployment of the modernized DCPDS. It applies to all US citizens in civilian positions paid from appropriated funds, and all Title 5 U.S.C. employees in the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard. This publication is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974.

### ***Section A—General Provisions***

#### **1. Background Information.**

- 1.1. Skill codes are part of a computerized record in DCPDS. They reflect duties of an employee's current position and previous work experiences. These codes are used in referring candidates for employment, placement of current employees into other positions, determining training and development needs for employees and selection for training under competitive procedures.
- 1.2. By using skill codes, pay grades, and other data elements, personnelists can compare candidates' possession of knowledge, skills, and abilities with those required to fill vacant positions. This is done through the use of the Promotions and Placements Referral System (PPRS) in DCPDS.
- 1.3. Skill codes provide information about skills available or needed within the civilian work force as a whole. They are useful in other processes such as skills location for special missions or projects, special emphasis programs and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) analysis.

#### **2. Terms Explained.**

- 2.1. **Organization and Function Code (formerly General Skill Code).** Three character code representing the organizational environment and the general function of the organization in which the work is performed. The first two characters represent the organizational environment and the third repre-

sents the basic function of the position within that environment. DCPDS Central Table 77 lists all Organization and Function Codes which exist.

**2.2. Skill Code Set.** Nine-character field consisting of three, three character groupings (i.e., XXX XXX XXX). The first grouping is the skill, the second the shred, and the third the subshred. The term "skill code set" refers to either the skill individually or the skill in combination with a shred or the skill in combination with a shred and subshred.

**2.2.1. Skill.** (XXX xxx xxx) First three character field representing the broadest kind of work category in the skill code set. A skill will generally identify a position by the title recognized with the occupational series or job code assigned.

**2.2.2. Shred.** (xxx XXX xxx) Second three character field indicating specialties found in skills or occupations. The shred represents a further occupational breakout; it adds specificity to an assigned skill.

**2.2.3. Subshred.** (xxx xxx XXX) Final three character field indicating the narrowest and most specific skill identifier. It represents a further occupational breakout; it adds further specificity to the assigned shred.

**2.3. Skill Code Definitions.** Listing which provides narrative descriptions of skill code sets. A Skill Code Definition Listing is updated and issued periodically by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC/DPKO).

**2.4. Occupational Series.** Occupations consisting of positions similar to a specialized line of work and qualification requirements. Series are types of work established and defined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

**2.5. Air Force Standardized Position Descriptions (SPDs)/Core Documents (SCDs).** A SPD/SCD is a single description used to cover a number of like positions throughout the Air Force. SPDs/SCDs provide a management tool for administratively grouping like positions into a single position description/core document, which may be treated alike for personnel administration purposes.

### **3. Air Force Procedures.**

**3.1.** Skill codes are developed for each occupational series authorized by OPM. Each code represents a work category within an occupation. Work categories (skills) and specialties (shreds and subshreds) are normally described in classification or qualification standards but may include those important for staffing patterns and career paths. Functional managers and personnelists use skill codes when developing promotion evaluation patterns and career paths.

**3.2.** DCPDS Central Table 465 (Skill Code Table) is arranged in numerical order by occupational series with authorized skill code sets shown for each series. It contains skill code sets specifically designated for Air Force as well as other agencies. Since some of the occupational series in the table represent codes for non-Air Force agencies and cannot be used to code Air Force positions or employee experience records, printed tables should only contain Air Force skill coding sets. Skill codes which have an asterisk preceding the code's title have been defined in the Skill Code Definitions listing.

## ***Section B—Responsibilities***

**4. Responsibilities of HQ USAF.** The Directorate of Civilian Personnel Policy and Personnel Plans, Civilian Policy Division, HQ USAF/DPCC, establishes policy for skill coding. DPCC maintains and updates the skill code table for non-career program positions when necessary and has final approval authority on new non-career program skill code sets added to DCPDS.

### **5. Responsibilities of AFPC.**

5.1. The Civilian Career Management Directorate (AFPC/DPK). DPK ensures uniformity of skill coding of all centrally managed career program positions, to include establishment of operational control for career program skill code practices in accordance with HQ USAF/DPCC policy.

5.1.1. Career Management Division (AFPC/DPKC). Individual functional career programs, PALACE Teams, are established within DPKC. These work with each of the various career program panels and Policy Councils in order to develop skill code sets and definitions. By reviewing career program positions and registrant's experience records, DPK works with functional and personnel representatives to ensure accurate and consistent skill coding, and determines the need for improvement in skill coding for specific occupations or specific locations. Proposals are given to AFPC/DPKO for review and approval.

5.1.2. The Integrated Systems Management Division (AFPC/DPKO). DPKI prepares system change requests to add, change, or delete skill code sets to DCPDS as approved and requested from HQ USAF/DPCC or AFPC/DPKO.

5.1.3. The Operations Support Division (AFPC/DPKO). DPKO provides central support for review, approval, and processing of career program requests to update the skill code table.

DPKO processes requests for skill code changes, determines which skill codes require published definitions in order to clarify the text in the skill code table, and issues the Skill Code Definitions listing.

5.2. The Field Support Division (AFPC/DPCF). DPCF assigns appropriate skill code sets to all newly developed or revised Air Force SPDs/SCDs. DPCF provides advice and guidance to CPFs and supervisors on SPD/SCD skill coding procedures. DPCF provides advice and guidance to employees and supervisors on skill coding policy and assigns skill code sets to unique positions for those installations to which AFPC/DPCF provides full classification servicing. Unique positions are defined as those not covered by an Air Force SPD/SCD. DPCF will review all requests for changes to Central Table 465 submitted from installations for which they provide full classification servicing to ensure appropriateness in meeting Air Force and MAJCOM requirements before submitting through the appropriate MAJCOM to Air Force or AFPC/DPKC, as appropriate, for approval.

**6. Responsibilities of CPF.** CPF staff provides advice and guidance to serviced employees and supervisors on skill coding policy. CPF staff assigns skill code sets to serviced positions not covered by an Air Force SPD/SCD. CPF staff will review all locally generated requests for changes to Central Table 465 to ensure appropriateness in meeting Air Force and MAJCOM requirements before submitting through the appropriate MAJCOM to Air Force or AFPC/DPKC, as appropriate, for approval.

**7. Responsibilities of Supervisors/Managers.** Supervisors assist in identifying appropriate skill codes when new positions are established and when duties of existing positions change. Supervisors inform subordinates as to why certain skill code sets were selected for the position and provide a broad overview as to how skill coding affects the Air Force automated staffing and placement system -- Promotion and Placement Referral System (PPRS). Supervisors review the skill codes assigned to their subordinate positions, inform employees of changes to skill codes, and contact the CPF or AFPC, as appropriate, to resolve coding inconsistencies or discrepancies. (When it becomes necessary to request changes to skill codes, follow guidelines in paragraphs **19.** and **20.**, as appropriate.)

**8. Responsibilities of Employees.** Employees review the skill codes assigned to their current position and to their previous work experience. Discrepancies with the current position description should first be brought to the attention of the supervisor and then to the CPF or AFPC personnelist. Discrepancies with past work experience can be annotated on the Civilian Career Brief and should be brought to the attention of the CPF for processing. Discrepancies in previous work experience may require the employee to provide additional information in order to resolve any inconsistencies between the initial Application for Federal Employment and the Amendment to Personnel Qualifications Statement.

### *Section C—Coding Procedures*

#### **9. Current Positions.**

9.1. Applicable skill code sets and the percentage of time for each are determined as part of the classification process. Skill codes are recorded in the appropriate blocks of the AF Form 1378, **Civilian Personnel Position Description (PD)**; AF Form 1003, **Civilian Personnel Core Documents (CD)**; or comparable forms.

9.2. Official PDs/CDs must include entries for the organization and function code, at least one skill code set, and a percentage of time. The total percentage of time for all skills coded must equal 100 percent. If the major duties and responsibilities can adequately be covered by one skill code set, the percentage of time is coded as 00 (100%). If not, the percentage of time is divided by the total number of sets used. The percentage of time for third skill code set, if used, is not coded as it is computed automatically by DCPDS.

9.3. Skill codes assigned to a position must be consistent with and derived from the duties and responsibilities described in the PD or CD. All changes to skill codes must be documented on the PD or CD. The supervisor and employee must be notified of changes.

9.4. For consistency, changes or corrections to skill codes must be applied to all affected positions (i.e., identical additional positions). As for changing history experience entries for previous incumbents in the affected position, judgment must be used in reviewing each situation on its own merits in order to determine if changes should be made.

9.5. SPDs/SCDs and career program skill code definitions provide specific instructions for the skill coding of these documents.

**10. Extent of Coding.** The most significant skill requirements of a position must be coded. A significant skill is considered to be regular, recurring, and essential for satisfactory performance in the position. Skill codes should be listed on the PD/CD and input into the DCPDS in order of importance (i.e., normally, the most important skill code (based on percentage of time)) is listed/input as the first skill code

set). Work which represents a skill important in the recruitment process may be coded without regard to the grade level (i.e., (Office Automation), (Stenography), or (Motor Vehicle Operator). Coding must be as detailed as possible to ensure employees receive appropriate credit for work being accomplished. Positions with significant duties no more than two levels below the established progression of the series assigned are given skill codes for those duties. Positions and work experiences require a minimum of one skill to complete each DCPDS entry. Shreds and subshreds must be assigned when available and appropriate. A shred cannot be used without a skill, and a subshred cannot be used without a shred. Generally, the use of three complete skill code sets is adequate to describe the most significant skills required by the position. For additional information of skill coding work experience, refer to paragraph 17.

**11. General Series.** Many positions are classified to a general series because they are mixed in terms of two or more specific series (and skill sets) or because no specialized series exists (i.e., GS-0201, GS-1101, GS-0301, etc.).

11.1. General Series Due to No Specialized Occupational Series. In some cases, positions are classified to the "01" series because there is no specific occupational series applicable or available for the type of work being accomplished. In such cases, judgment must be used in skill coding these positions. If "01" skill codes are available, they may be used.

Care should be taken when selecting skill codes from other series to ensure proper recognition is given for work to be performed.

11.2. General Series Due to Mixed Series/Skills. In situations where a position is placed in a general series because it contains a mix of work from several series within an occupational group or groups and no series is paramount, the position would normally be skill coded using skill codes for the respective occupational series. There is no requirement to use the skill code set for the general series and in most cases using series specific skills would be more in line with training, recruitment and placement needs. Additionally, there may be no "01" skill code set in Table 465. Again, judgment is used in making the most appropriate determination. A case in which the general series skill code would not be used is in the WG-4749, Maintenance Mechanic series. It would be more appropriate to skill code a position with the three significant skills being performed than to use the WG-4749 general skill in the first set and two other significant skills in the remaining sets.

11.3. When it becomes necessary to request new skill codes for general series, the guidelines provided in paragraph 19. apply. Such requests are processed through normal system enhancement channels.

## **12. Special Skills.**

12.1. Collateral duties in support of EEO and Affirmative Action are coded as either part of the employee's current position or as a detail. If the PD/CD has utilized all three skill code sets, then a detail position record is created in DCPDS in order to record the collateral duties. This type of action requires changes to the length of the detail on a recurring basis until the collateral duties are no longer being performed by the employee. Details of this nature should only be used as a mechanism to enter the collateral duties in the DCPDS employee record. SF 50, **A Notification of Personnel Action**, will not be generated as a result of this action.

12.2. Positions classified to nonprofessional series may not be assigned skill codes for professional series; a series with a specific positive education requirement. This is true even when the incumbent

meets the requirement by possessing the proper educational degree. For example, a position properly classified to the GS-560 Budget Analysis series may not be assigned GS-510 Accounting skill codes, even though the incumbent is a qualified accountant. Likewise, engineering technician positions may not be assigned skill codes for professional engineering duties. Positions classified to a professional series must have the skill of the profession coded as the first skill code set. Nonprofessional skill code sets may be added, if appropriate.

12.3. Interdisciplinary professional positions are coded with skill code sets reflecting the profession from which the selection was made. The other professions are not coded. If necessary, a vacant interdisciplinary professional position may be coded "YYY," Skill Code Pending, until a selection is made. At the time of selection, the appropriate interdisciplinary skill code is recorded on the PD/CD and in DCPDS. Or skill code sets for each classification may be shown on the PD/CD.

12.4. Supervisory positions classified to general series are skill coded according to the rules for non-supervisory positions with the following considerations:

12.4.1. Supervisory positions are coded with the significant skill code sets of the subordinate employees supervised, provided the supervisor exercises technical supervision over those subordinates.

12.4.2. A supervisory position with a work force of professional and nonprofessional positions requires close analysis for classification and skill coding purposes. A supervisory position classified to a nonprofessional series cannot have professional skill codes assigned. A supervisory nonprofessional position can be responsible for administrative supervision of a professional employee without having the technical knowledge of the subordinate professional employee's area of responsibility. Even though the subordinate professional position may be considered in grading the supervisor's position, the supervisory position is not coded with professional skill codes unless professional qualifications are required. For example, a Housing Manager, GS-1173, position supervising a Civil Engineer, GS-810, is not coded with GS-810 skill codes. Likewise, if a supervisory position is classified into a professional series, at least the first skill code set must reflect the professional duties/skills required.

### **13. "More Than Capacity--XXX" Use as a Shred or Subshred.**

13.1. Some positions have skills in more than three occupations, specialties, or areas within one or more specialties. Since the position record in DCPDS only accommodates three skill code sets, some work skills will not be coded in DCPDS or recorded on the PD/CD. In Central Table 465, series with more than three authorized skill code sets have the shred XXX, "More than capacity to code." This option is for positions that exceed the three skill code set limit. This option is to be used as a last resort in skill coding mixed positions. Judgment should be used in considering whether or not use of "XXX" will enhance or actually impede the recruitment process or the credit given to employees for the work accomplished. Code XXX will be used only when significant duties would not otherwise be creditable due to the limit of three skill code sets. Code XXX is never used when specific skill sets can be coded or when skill sets two or three have not been coded.

Code XXX is not used for specialization's for which specific shreds or subshreds have not been established; the "XXX" specialization's must be listed in Central Table 465 in order to be used.

13.2. Detail position records are not established in DCPDS to credit skills that can be accommodated by using shred or subshred XXX, except for collateral duties and special assignments.

13.3. When an employee passes through a progression level factor (PLF) in a Promotion Evaluation Pattern (PEP) for possible referral due to an "XXX" shred or subshred coded into his/her personnel record, the employee's personnel folder must be hand-screened by a personnelist in order to verify that the code XXX represents the skill desired in the PEP. For that reason, PDs/CDs, Applications for Employment, and Amendment to Personal Qualifications Statements must reflect and state the clear text description of the "XXX" shreds and /or subshreds applicable to the position as well as the percentage of time for each.

#### **14. Trainee Positions.**

14.1. Trainee positions established as part of a formal training program often include rotational assignments through many specialties. Normally specific skill sets exist for each rotational assignment; however, trainees may spend different lengths of time in different functions depending on personal goals and work force skill requirements. If a specific skill code set has not been established for a trainee position, the following rules apply:

14.1.1. When the trainee position is targeted to a specific series upon completion of training, the trainee position may be coded with the same skill code as the target position.

14.1.2. When the trainee's rotational assignments include performance of substantive work, not just orientation and formal training, the trainee position is coded the same as any other position in the organization, using the appropriate skills, shreds and subshreds.

14.1.3. If neither of the above apply, the trainee position is assigned skill codes for the basic skill of the occupation for which the employee is being trained. Shreds and subshreds need not be coded.

**15. Air Force SPDs/SCDs.** Most Air Force SPDs/SCDs and guideline PDs/CDs include at least one skill code set. Modifications to SPD/SCD content requires a review of the skill codes and the percentage of time allocated. If more than one skill code set is indicated on a SPD/SCD, the percentage of time shown reflects expectations about the normal work situation. If a site audit shows a different percentage of time, the position record is corrected and , if appropriate, experience records as well. Changes to SPD/SCD skill codes must be coordinated with the office who classified the SPD/SCD.

**16. Part-time/Intermittent.** Part-time or intermittent employees are given a skill code of "NCP" (Non-creditable Part-time) in one of the three skill code sets. The percentage to be used for "NCP" is based on a 40-hour workweek, estimating the number of hours the intermittent or part-time employee works each week. For example, a part-time employee working a 20-hour workweek would receive 50% credit for the skill being accomplished with the remaining 50% being coded as "NCP," noncreditable. This applies to part-time and intermittent skill coding on both the employee's current position record and past work experience record. In addition, "NCP" is used whenever an entry is built in DCPDS for off-duty experience by employees (i.e., Reservists).

**17. Previous Work Experience.** In addition to the procedures mentioned above, the following procedures should be followed for previous work experience situations:

17.1. Initial coding of an employee's previous work experience is based on information provided in the Official Personnel File (OPF). Work experience is coded as though it had been Federal Civil Service experience in terms of pay plan, occupational series, grade, and skill code set. Non-Federal, mil-

itary, nonappropriated fund, Postal Service, Foreign Service experience, etc., is equated to the General Schedule (GS), Senior Executive Service (SES), or Federal Wage System (FWS) pay plans for skill coding purposes. A separate data element is available to indicate the type of experience. (Reference AFMAN 30-130, volume IV for complete instructions on coding previous work experience.)

17.2. Work experience is coded using the most applicable skill codes. Retail sales experience, for example, may have provided skills in the GS-300 or GS-1100 groups, clerical skills in the GS-303 series, or specialized clerical experience in the Sales Store Clerical Series, GS-2091. In this case, all skills should be coded.

17.3. Periods of unemployment are not coded. The skill code ZZZ, Unemployed, is used only for unemployed reinstatement candidates who are registered in the Career Program External Applicant System program.

17.4. Coding for all employees must include, as a minimum, experience three grade levels below their current grade or 10 years of experience, whichever is greater (see below). Any additional experience coding should be done on the basis of normal career patterns.

17.4.1. Minimum coding requirements for current GS and SES employees:

<u>If Current Grade Is</u>	<u>Then Code GS or Equivalent Experience At</u>
SES or equiv	GS-13 and up
14 to 15	GS-11 and up
12 to 13	GS-7 and up
11	GS-5 and up
7 to 10	GS-4 and up
1 to 6	3 grades below current grade (or 10 years)

17.4.2. Minimum coding requirements for current FWS employees:

<u>If Current Level Is</u>	<u>Then Code FWS or Equivalent Experience At</u>
Wage Supervisor (WS)	All WS, Wage Leader (WL), and highest Wage Grade (WG) grade
Wage Leader (WL)	All WS (in any), WL and three highest WG grades
Wage Grade (WG)	Any WS and WL
WG-8 and up	All WG-5 and up
WG 1 to 7	All experience below current grade (or 10 years)

17.4.3. Employees with both GS and FWS experience and employees who have been changed to a lower grade may require considerable coding beyond the 10 year limit in order to meet the levels indicated above.

17.5. Obsolete occupational series and pay plans are equated to current ones when coding prior Federal experience. To the extent possible, programmatic conversions will change superseded series to the successor series when OPM cancels an occupational series. Changes to skill codes are also made programmatically whenever possible and economical. Personnel responsible for experience coding must change experience records if a converter cannot be issued; for example, when OPM has not identified one specific series as successor to the abolished series, or no specific coding scheme has been developed.

17.6. When an employee condenses several years of prior experience into one experience entry on a Application for Federal Employment or an Amendment to Personnel Qualifications Statement, several DCPDS experience entries may be needed to accurately describe the experience. The employee must furnish additional information, if requested, which provides inclusive dates and descriptions of work performed. This is necessary to separate intermediate or developmental experience from full performance level experience, to distinguish supervisory and nonsupervisory work experience, and to differentiate between separate job responsibilities.

17.7. Creditable experience must have been performed at least 30 consecutive days and be properly documented with an amendment to employment application form, a detail experience entry, or SF 50, with the following exceptions:

17.7.1. Creditable experience gained while on duty with the Reserve or National Guard may be coded even though performed for less than 30 consecutive days. Requests to credit this type of experience should be submitted when 30 cumulative days or more have been attained.

17.7.2. Experience gained while performing duties as a Resource Augmentation Duty (READY) Program augmentee will be coded when an employee accumulates 20 or more workdays during a 12-month period.

17.7.3. Employees deploying under Contingency-Exercise-Mobility (CEM) orders will be given credit for a detail, regardless of the amount of time deployed, placing them on a position at the geographical location to which he/she is deployed. The Organization and Function Code will always be "CTY," Contingency.

17.8. Experience in the same line of work can only be credited on the basis of a regular 40-hour workweek. An employee performing the same work for one or more employers for more than 40 hours a week is not credited with experience beyond that which would have been gained working at one job for 40 hours. An employee performing two different jobs is credited with the experience gained in each job. Percentages of time for each skill are calculated in terms of a 40-hour workweek.

17.9. Separation for military service and the recall of a reservist, official details, and other special assignments are skill coded using detail procedures. The beginning and ending dates of the continuous service are coded as they actually occurred, without regard for the interruption. The beginning and ending dates for the interrupting service (i.e., recall, official details, etc.) are coded in the detail position. Do not treat these events as separate experiences by terminating the continuous service, starting and terminating the interrupting service, and then starting the continuous service again.

**18. Acquisition Coding.** If a position is identified as an acquisition position by the functional community, appropriate acquisition codes must be coded against the position and in DCPDS in addition to coding the appropriate skill code sets. Normally, functional managers will identify the appropriate acquisition codes to be used.

## **19. Revisions to Skill Code Sets.**

19.1. To request new or changes to existing skill code sets in Central Table 465, functional management officials must submit the proposed clear text and proposed narrative definition through civilian personnel channels for consideration (reference **Section B**). Skill code change requests should be kept to a minimum during the use of the legacy DCPDS. If approved, the request is forwarded to AFPC/DPKI for DCPDS update. Copies of PDs/CDs, the number and grade levels of the positions affected, functional statements, efforts taken to identify the skill by using combinations of existing skill code sets, and the negative impact if disapproved, should be submitted.

19.2. Shreds should not be requested for unique skills or for skills found only at one grade level.

## **20. Requesting Changes to Assigned Skill Codes.**

20.1. Requests by supervisors and employees to change skill codes assigned to a current PD/CD and any previous work experience will be reviewed by the servicing CPF for appropriateness and further processing. If the current PD/CD is a SPD/SCD, follow instructions at paragraph **15**.

20.2. Requests by employees to change skill codes to current PDs/CDs due to their performing additional duties will be reviewed by the immediate supervisor. Significant duties of less than 30 consecutive days should be annotated on the employee's AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Record of Employee**. Exceptions to the "30-consecutive day" rule are: duties performed while deployed to a contingency location, which will be coded in DCPDS regardless of the number of days deployed, and duties performed as a READY Program augmentee, which will be coded into DCPDS once 20 or more workdays are accumulated in a 12-month period (reference paragraphs **17.7.2.** and **17.7.3.**). For experience consisting of 30 days or more, the request must be reviewed and certified as accurate by the immediate

supervisor, coordinated through the next level of management, and then sent to the CPF for appropriate review and processing. Such requests, if approved, are coded as details. ***Note: The AFPC/DPC operations Manual contains specific instructions on Amendment to Personnel Qualifications Statement processing. If management determines the duties are officially assigned and of a continuing nature, the supervisor will initiate a detail action or revise the PD/CD, as appropriate.***

20.3. Requests to change skill codes assigned to previous work experience must be supported by certified official documents, records or other convincing evidence provided by the employee or the supervisory official who can verify the work was performed. For Federal experience, the PD/CD and SF 50 are the primary source documents. Employees must furnish additional information, if requested, which provides adequate justification in order for the skill codes to be changed.

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